



News Release

U.S. Representative Chris Chocola

Second District, Indiana

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Koontz Lake Improvements Authorized in Water Bill

With Chocola's backing, project could receive federal funds for two more years

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola (R-Ind.) and his House colleagues overwhelmingly approved the Water Resources Development Act by a wide, bipartisan margin of 406-14. The bill includes projects and studies related to navigation, flood control, or environmental protection to be carried out by the Army Corps of Engineers. One of the projects authorized for continued work is Koontz Lake in Starke County, Ind.

“I have been discussing the Koontz Lake project with the Koontz Lake Environmental Enhancement Committee for some time now,” said Chocola. “I am very pleased it was again authorized to receive federal funding and I look forward to helping KLEEC finish this project.”

Koontz Lake was a spring fed lake without any surface inlets until 1932 when the Lawrence Pontius Ditch (LPD) was constructed to help drain the agricultural fields. Unintentionally, LPD allowed sediments and agricultural nutrients to enter into Koontz Lake with the result being a degraded public lake. The sediment and nutrient loading has virtually stopped with the construction of drop structures and a wetland by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and KLEEC. However, to complete the restoration, a portion of the sediments and nutrients that are stirred up by recreational vehicles and wind driven waves needs to be removed. The language in this bill allows that work to occur.

Chocola also praised the reforms included in the Water Resources Development Act aimed at the Army Corps of Engineers. The bill passed by the House provides for an independent peer review of proposed Corps projects costing more than \$50 million, or of smaller projects deemed to be controversial. It also includes provisions designed to improve the Corps' efficiency and management, including a new fiscal transparency report.

“As a former member of the Water Resources Subcommittee, it is good to know that the first steps of “Corps Reform” are included in this bill,” said Chocola. “With nearly \$10 billion going to almost 700 projects, it is important to have an honest accounting and review of how taxpayer dollars are being spent on these projects.”

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